- 1. Introduction to Connexions Lenses
- 2. How to Use a Connexions Lens
- 3. Why You should Create a Personal Connexions Account
- 4. Creating a Connexions Account
- 5. <u>How to Create a Connexions Lens</u>
- 6. Making Your Connexions Lens Public
- 7. Branding a Connexions Lens

#### Introduction to Connexions Lenses

A general introduction to lenses within the Connexions web site. Covered are the purpose and types of lenses along with using the lens tab.

# The Lens Concept

When we talk about lenses in a microscope, telescope or even our eye glasses; we are using the lens to be able to **focus**. You want to see part of the picture more clearly. With my eye glasses (tri-focal lenses) I use part of the lens to see distance, part for my computer screen and part for reading. My glasses are really three lenses and depending on which lens I use, I see more clearly that part of picture in front of my eyes. A telescope allows us to focus on one part of the sky, perhaps the moon, a planet or one of the many stars. A microscope let's focus on part of what is on the slide more clearly.

In a major information repository like Connexions with thousands of modules (knowledge chucks), we want to use a lens to be able to focus on the content of the repository that is good or useful to us. The **focus** could be on:

- Quality materials
- Materials covering a specific topic
- Materials associated with an organization
- A combination of the above

## **A Connexions Lens**

"Lenses enable both organizations and individuals to give their stamps of approval to content in the repository, allowing for user-driven quality control of modules and collections." [footnote] As seen above, the quality control aspect is only one of the ways a lens could be used. A lens is made by somebody, a person, even if it is a person within an organization. When you use a lens, you are looking at the content of the repository through that person's eyes. Thus the lens is a focused part of the repository as they, the lens creator, sees things. You, the user of a lens, are the ultimate judge of the quality and usefulness of a lens and the materials that it shows. The

three groups of people that create lenses are associated with what type of user account that they have.

Lenses Help Tab – Connexions web site at: <a href="http://cnx.org/help/viewing/lenses">http://cnx.org/help/viewing/lenses</a>

- Connexions Project (people creating items as Connexions staff members)
- Organization Accounts
- Individual Accounts

Anyone can create an individual user account. Follow the directions on the Connexions home page at: <a href="http://cnx.org/">http://cnx.org/</a>

Organizations should contact the Connexions Community Developers and request instructions on establishing an organization type of account. Email them at: <a href="mailto:cnx@cnx.org">cnx@cnx.org</a>

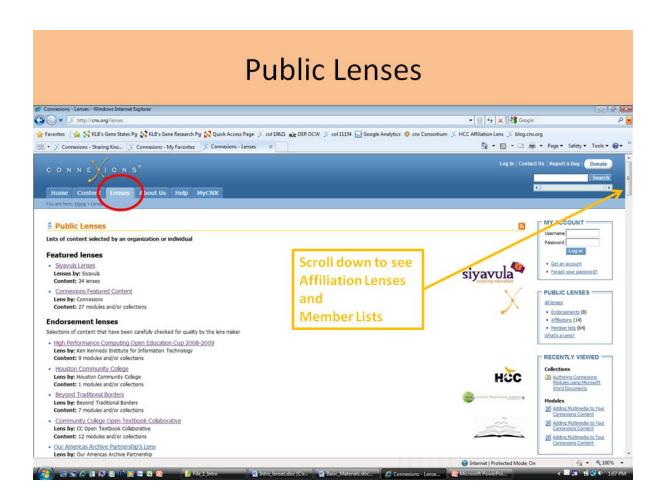
Lenses come in 5 varieties and are basically similar in how they are built and used.

- **Featured Lenses** Created by the Connexions project as special lenses. These lenses are always public (available for all to see).
- **Endorsement Lenses** Created by organizations, such as professional societies, businesses, educational institutions, etc. The lens contents have been carefully reviewed and deem to be of high quality by the organization. These lenses are usually public.
- **Affiliation Lenses** Created by organizations, such as professional societies and educational institutions. The lens content has been created by members of that organization (but not necessarily reviewed). Though not as rigorous as an endorsement lens, content in an affiliation lens is assumed to be of a quality on par with other members of that organization. These lenses are usually public.
- **Member Lists** Any account holder (Connexions, organizations or individuals) can create member list lenses to organize related content, such as to keep track of referenced source materials or to use as a course reading list for students. There lenses may be public (available for all to see) or private (only available to the creator of the lens when they are logged in to their account).

My Favorites Lens – Each user account has a private My Favorites
lens which can be used to keep track of a user's favorite modules and
collections. In addition to bookmarking content of personal interest,
the My Favorites lens also allows readers to start reading from where
they last left off within a bookmarked collection. You can access your
personal My Favorites lens by selecting the MyCNX tab and clicking
on the "My Favorites" link (login required).

## The List of Public Lenses at Connexions

The easy way to see the public lenses is to use the "Lenses" tab on the Connexions home page.



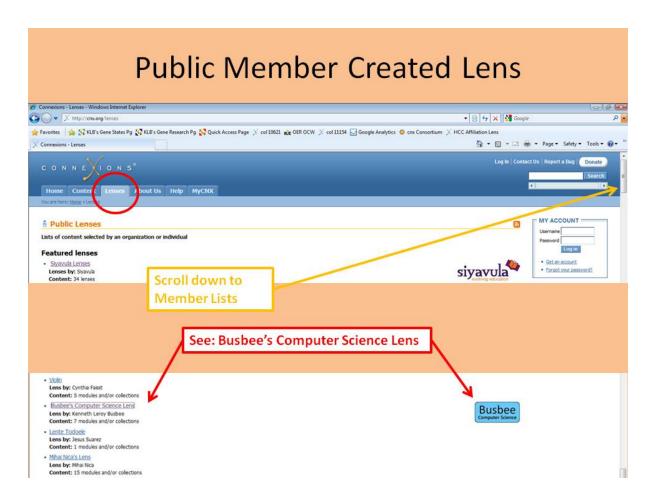
http://cnx.org/lenses

#### How to Use a Connexions Lens

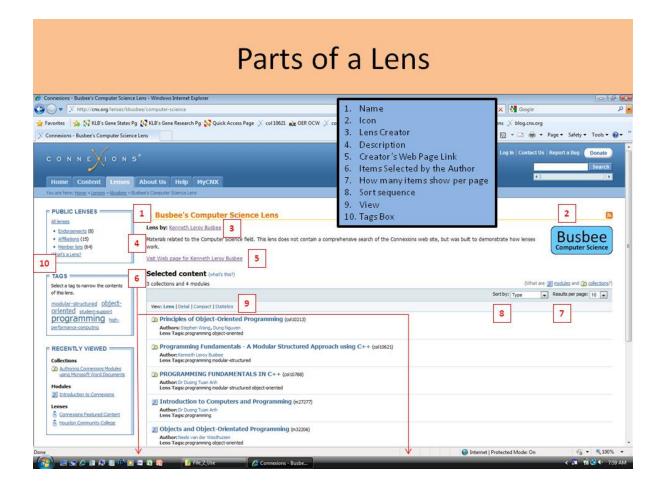
An explanation of how to use an existing Connexions lens and the tags within a lens to further focus on the lens contents.

# **Using Public Lenses**

The best way to learn about how to use or view lenses is to get a little bit of understanding and then practice (play around with several lenses). We have a public member's list lens that was created specifically for this module. We will go through the general understanding of using a lens and then direct you to the web site for some play time.



Public Member Created Lens: Busbee's Computer Science Lens



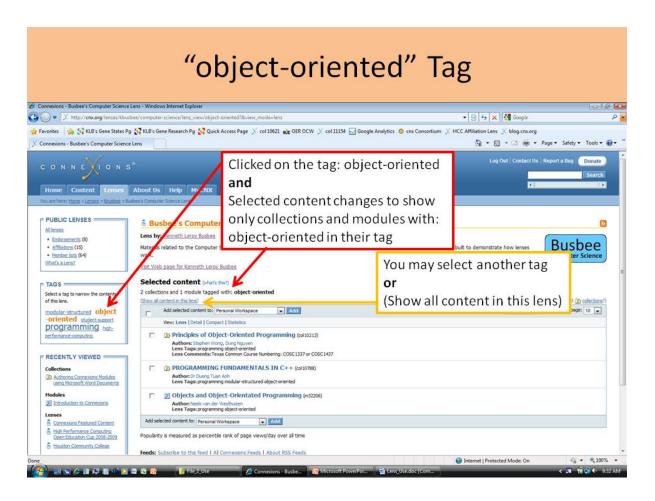
Parts of a Lens

The parts and general information about a lens are as follows:

- 1. Lens Name
- 2. Icon Not all lenses have icons
- 3. Lens Creator You can click on this link and it will show the creator's profile.
- 4. Description The creator's comments about the lens. Usually includes the purpose.
- 5. Creator's Web Page Link Not all lenses have web page links

- 6. Items Selected by the Creator This is a list of the Connexions modules and collections that the creator has associated with this lens.
- 7. How many items show per page adjustable by the user (or viewer) of the lens
- 8. Sort sequence Usually in "Type" sequence which places the "Selected Content" (Item 6) with collections first and modules second; each group sorted alphabetically. The user (or viewer) of the lens may choose from the following sort sequences:
- Popularity
- Language
- Revision Date
- Title
- Type
- Rating As rated by viewers of the modules. This feature was added during 2009 and may not be useful until more people rate modules within the Connexions repository. If rated by several people, it can be used as a **measure of quality**.
- View "Lens" is the normal default. The user (or viewer) may choose from the following views which always show the title and author, plus:
- Lens shows the tag information and comments; if they exist
- Detail shows the author's institution, keywords and summary for the module or collection; if they exist
- Compact shows only the title and author
- Statistics shows total view, views per day, percentile ranking and raw module count ranking. Since there are over 15,000 modules and collections, any raw ranking of 1,500 or lower would be in the top 10% of materials viewed. The percentile ranking may be more useful because it will not be distorted over time. As the Connexions repository grows (let's say to 30,000 modules and collections) the raw ranking of 1,500 or lower would represent the top 5% of the repository. Statistics might be a **measure of quality**, but you should consider that usage (forced upon students using a collection as a textbook) and quality are not necessarily interchangeable.
- Tags Box By the representation of their size (larger meaning more items in the lens have that tag word) the tags box contains tag words as

used by the creator of the lens as they select material for the lens. The creator does not have to use tags, but most lenses have tags. As the creator of a lens adds modules or collections to the lens, they are given the opportunity to place tags (additional words that can be used to further **focus** on lens content) and comments. The tags are useful in that the user (or viewer) of the lens can see a more precise focus on lens contents. An Example follows:



The use of a tag to further focus a lens

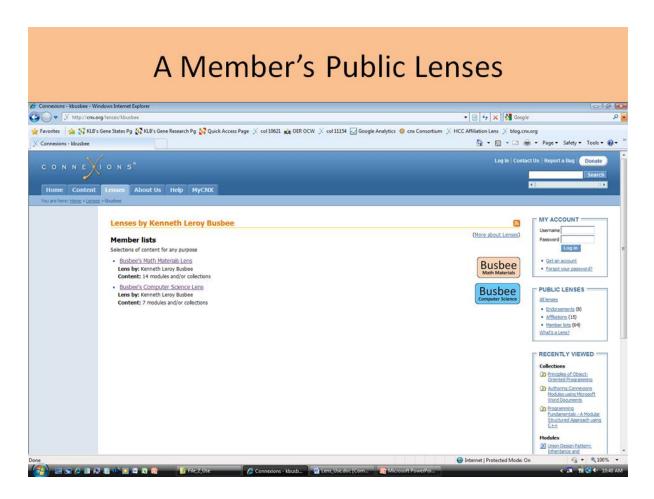
# Other Ways to Select a Lens

#### **Member Profile**

Anywhere on the Connexions web site when you see "by:" it refers to the author or creator of the item. Several examples are:

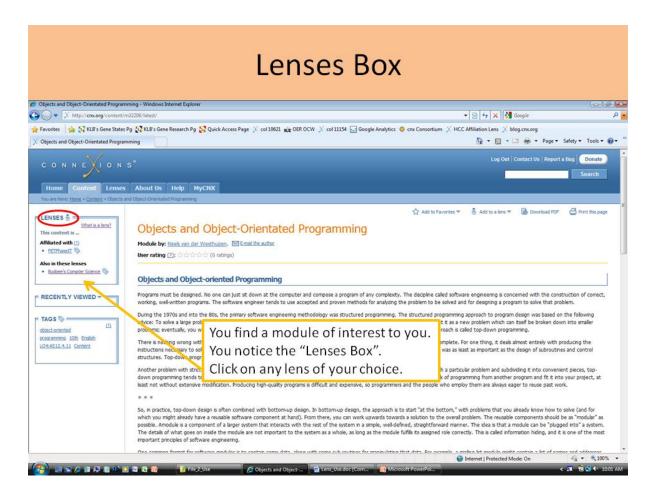
- Author: (the word "by" is not used)
- Module by:
- Course by:
- Lens by:

The name that appears to the right is a link to the Member Profile for that author/creator. When you click on it you see the member's profile and information about any lenses that they have created.

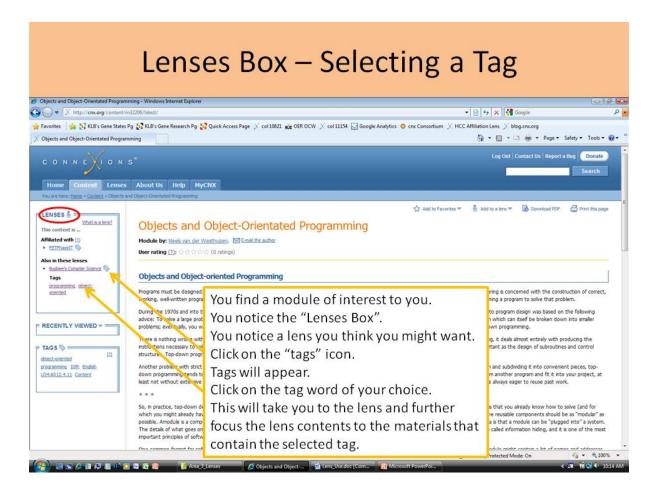


A Member's Public Lenses

#### Lenses Box



Lenses Box – normal usage



Lenses Box – Additional focus using a tag

## **Practice Using Lenses**

The best way to understand how to use lenses is to practice or play with them. A suggestion is to practice all of the items in this module. You can do that by starting at the "Lenses" tab of the Connexions web site.

The direct link to Busbee's Computer Science Lens is: <a href="http://cnx.org/lenses/kbusbee/computer-science">http://cnx.org/lenses/kbusbee/computer-science</a>

Why You should Create a Personal Connexions Account
The several reasons (saving your place as you read a collection, rating
modules, creating lenses and building content) for having a Connexions
accout are highlighted. Included are directions to general training on how to
understand and use the Connexions web site and these features.

## **Several Good Reasons**

With a Connexions account you can:

- Provide feedback to authors and other users by rating modules This feedback from all users (other authors, students using textbook collections, etc.) helps authors decide which modules need improving and helps other users in evaluating the quality of respository content.
- Have your own "My Favorites" lens and make other "Member List" lenses
  - **Save your place** when reading through a collection is a feature of the "My Favorites" lens
  - You can make yourown private "Member List" lenses to create the ability for you to **focus on part of the repository**
- Improve the quality of instructional materials and scholarly works available to the world via the Internet free 24/7
  - Contribute materials that you author to the Connexions repository
  - **Remix or change** (customize) materials provided by others that are in the Connexions repository
  - Build collections (a group of modules) that specifically serve your students or audience from modules that you either create, improve or use without changing

Often being an author, is over emphasized and pushed as the number one reason to get a Connexions account. Having authors contribute to the repository is important; however usage of the repository by users is equally important. **Increasing quality content** in the Connexions repository goes

hand in hand with increased usage of that content. It's like the Chinese "Yin & Yang", both are important. We encourage all to create an personal account.



Yin & Yang

# **Available Training**

A link is provided (in the box at the upper right corner of this module's page) to the "Busbee's Connexions Training" lens. It contains six collections that cover:

- 1. Understanding the Vision of Connexions
- 2. How to Search and Browse the Connexions Web Site (includes rating modules)
- 3. Effectively Using and Creating Connexions Lenses
- 4. Authoring Connexions Modules using Microsoft Word Documents
- 5. Ideas and Tools for Improving Connexions Modules and Collections
- 6. Appendix Materials for a Connexions Collection used as a College Course

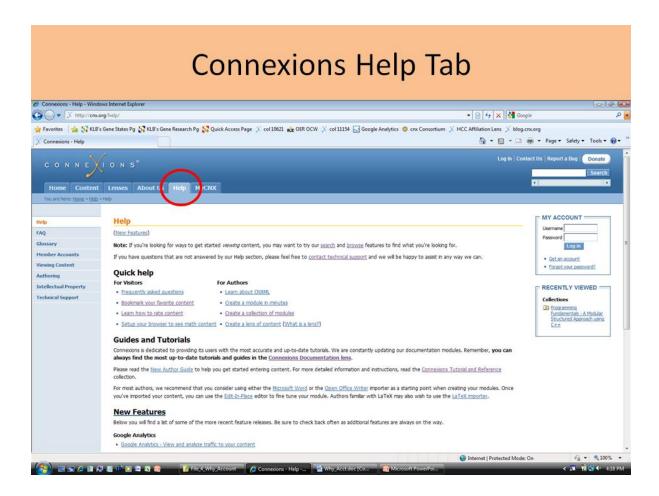
Each collection consists of several modules. The items appear alphabetically within the lens; however the "Lens Comments" for each item has its item position number similar to the list above. **The first four items provide a natural progression for training.** 

You might want to bookmark the URL to the lens in your browser. The link is: <a href="http://cnx.org/lenses/kbusbee/cnx-training">http://cnx.org/lenses/kbusbee/cnx-training</a>

# **Connexions Help**

Don't hesitage to use the "Help" tab on the connexions home page at: <a href="http://cnx.org/">http://cnx.org/</a>

It is organized differently than the above training collections, but contains ample information on how to use the Connexions Project. Don't be afraid to click on something. Some of the menu items on the left expand as you click on them.



Connexions Help Tab

Creating a Connexions Account Some pointers on creating a good Member Profile as you create your Connexions account. How to modify your Member Profile.

### **Create an Account**

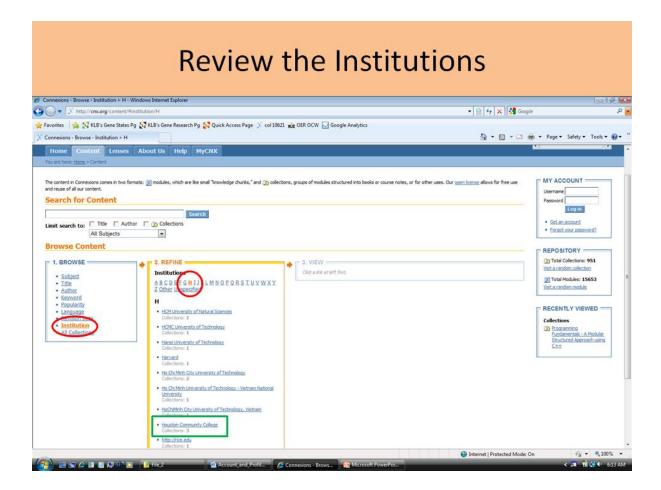
From the Connexions home page at: <a href="http://cnx.org">http://cnx.org</a> select the "Get an account" under Step 1. Follow the process as directed. When prompted for "Member Profile" information you should complete fields as appropriate. The following will help you to complete certain areas.

#### **Affiliation – Institution**

You should review how others are typing their "Affiliation" and type yours the same. For example: authors from Houston Community College <u>could</u> use: HCC or Houston CC or Houston Community College. However, they <u>should</u> all use: Houston Community College. This is not super important for the profile, but you will want to type the "Institution" field in a collection consistently so collections created by authors from the same institution will all show up together when users do an institution search. The following two slides show you how to browse to the "Institutions" search and review what authors from your institution are using for their affiliation/institution name.

#### Browsing by: Title, author, etc. Connexions - Sharing Knowledge and Building Communities - Windows Internet Explorer + 😣 ++ 🗶 🚰 Google ○ ▼ X http://cnx.org/ 🙀 Favorites 🛮 🕍 KLB's Gene States Pg 👯 KLB's Gene Research Pg 👯 Quick Access Page 💢 col 10621 📸 OER OCW 🗔 Google Analytics Log In | Contact Us | Report a Bug | Donate a place to view and share educational material made of small knowledge chunks called modules that can be organized as courses, books, reports, etc. Anyone may 15653 reusable modules woven into 951 collections. Go Title Author Keyword Subject instructors rapidly build and share custom collections Language · learners find and explore content Support More about us .... New features Title, author, etc. F FEATURED CONTENT = Advanced Algebra II Algebra II The world of second-year algebra comes alwe in Kenny Feider's <u>Advanced Algebra</u> II. Feider, a high school math teacher in North Carolina, designed his course using a nontraditional approach to a very traditional subject. Centered around a !pumpenyof and Activities book, along with accompanying <u>Concentual Evolunations</u> and <u>Teacher's Guide</u> collections, <u>Advanced Algebra II</u> Tackles topics by focusing on comprehension rather than straight lecture delivery. <u>Advanced Algebra III</u> was selected by Calfornia's <u>Free Dottal Teachbook Instative</u> to be included in a list of free available to Calfornia schools starting in Fall 2009. SPOTLIGHT : 3 Publish your works, sharing them with the world. How to create a module in minutes Connexions Tutorial and Reference . How to create a collection with existing modules

Browsing



Reviewing institution names

**Note:** You could be the first author and might need to decide what to use for your institution.

## **Biography – Short Biographical Sketch**

Prepare a short biography about yourself. Information should include your current job, past employment, educational and professional attainments, etc.

#### **Portrait – Picture**

Using your picture processing skills; modify a picture of yourself cropping it square. It should be no greater than 150 by 150 pixels on each side. Usually this file is stored in a .jpg format.

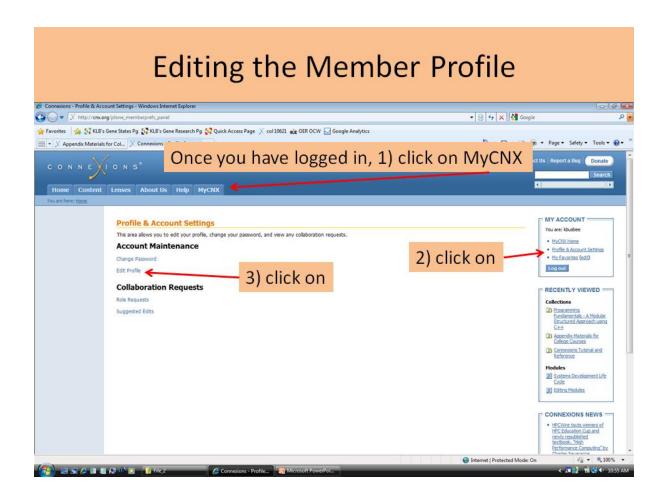
**Note:** The Connexions web site will shrink your picture to fit its allocated space; thus, to avoid distortion, you should make sure to crop the picture square.

## **Example**

A link is provided (in the box at the upper right corner of this module's page) to my "Member Profile" (for Kenneth Leroy Busbee) at Connexions.

## **Editing your Member Profile**

You can change your "Member Profile" at any time. This slide shows how to get to the page for changing it.



Editing an Member Profile

How to Create a Connexions Lens Step by step instructions on how to create a Connexions lens. Adding tags to the modules or collections within the lens is explained.

## **Lens Creation – Overview**

Every account has a "My Favorites" lens. It's there and you can use it or not, but you can't delete it. All accounts can create "Member List" lenses. The creation of "Endorsement" and "Affiliation" lenses are restricted to organization accounts that are specifically authorized by the Connexions Community Developers. Organizations should contact them request instructions on establishing an organization type of account. Email them at: <a href="mailto:cnx@cnx.org">cnx@cnx.org</a>

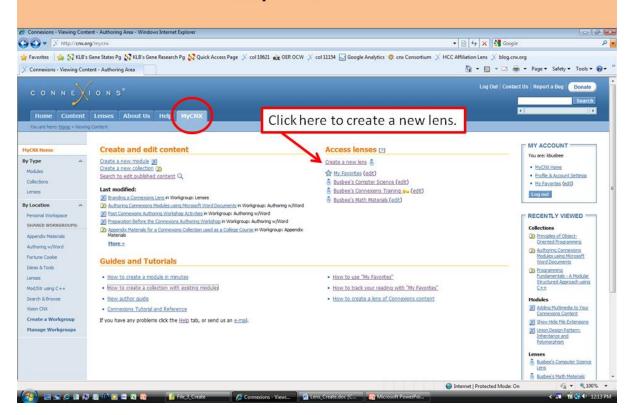
Lens creation is done in two parts:

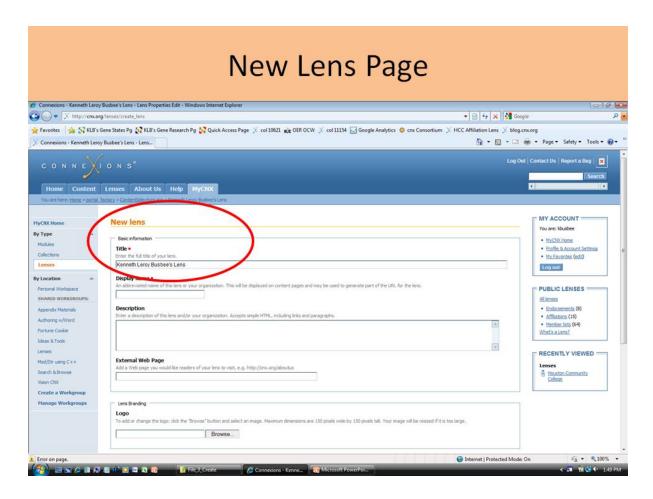
- Building the lens (also known as lens properties)
- Adding modules and collections to the lens (also known as lens content)

Other than one minor difference for building "Endorsement" and "Affiliation" lenses, their construction is identical to "Member List" lenses. At the end of this module, we will cover that one minor difference with some additional instructions that pertain to "Endorsement" and "Affiliation" lenses.

## **Creating a New Lens**

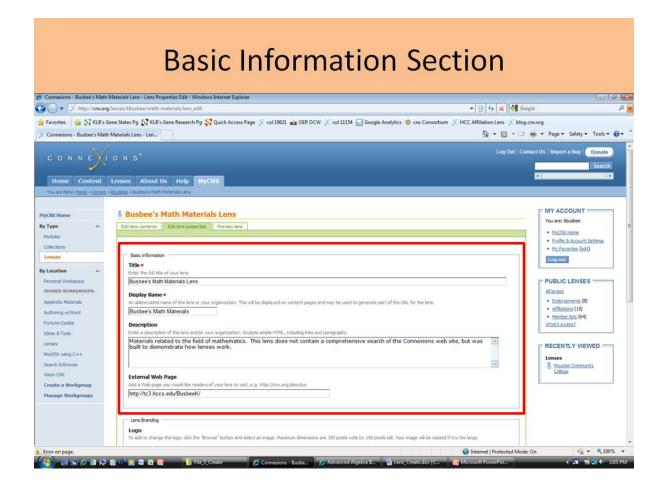
# MyCNX Tab





The New lens page with defaulted title

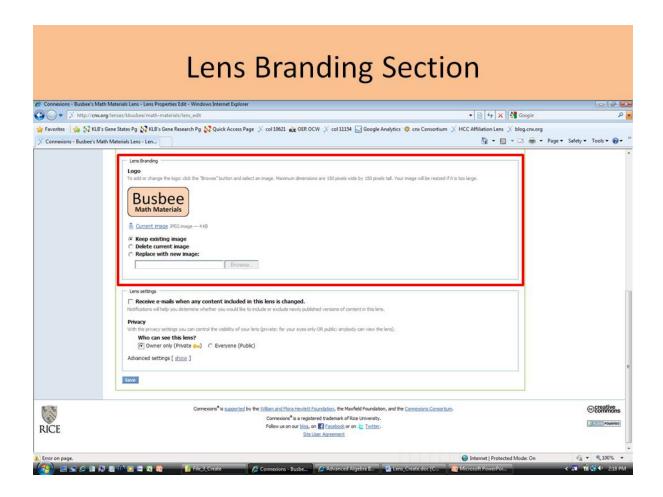
The new lens page contains the same information sections as the "Edit lens properties" tab when editing an existing lens. We are going to show you the different sections and provide instructions as needed on a lens that is already built.



**Basic Information Section** 

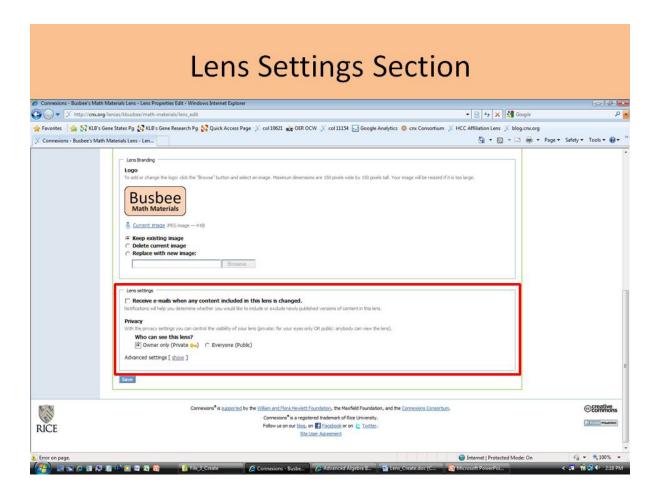
The basic information section consists for four items:

- Title short but descriptive name usually ending in "Lens"
- Display Name usually the same as the title but without the word "Lens"
- Description enter a clear description or the purpose of the lens
- External Web Page Enter a URL for this lens (optional). Some will want to enter a web page associated with them, such as, their home page or a class page for a college course.



Lens Branding Section

Lens branding for a "Member List" lens has only one item: Logo. Many member list lenses do not have a logo. Individuals can create a logo if they desire. Organizations usually have a logo. You can select the radio button "Replace with new image" and the "Browse" selector will become active. Click on it and browse to the location on your computer were the logo you desire to use resides. The directions indicate that your logo should be 150 by 150 pixels or smaller. Most people use either .jpg or .gif file



Lens Settings Section

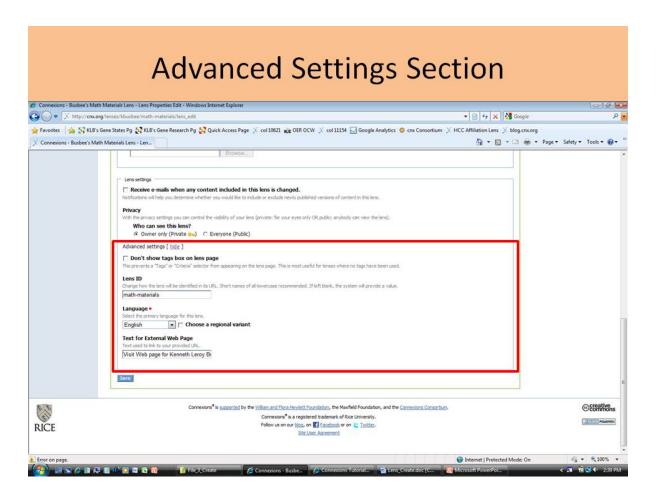
The lens setting section consists of three items:

 Receive email – After you finish building the lens you will add some content and some of the content on your lens might be made by others. If that is the case, you might want to check this box so that when the authors of the content on your lens change something, you will be notified.

**Note:**I have this box unchecked because this lens was created for training purposes and not as a lens to be used for focusing on

repository content. I do not care if the authors are modifying the modules and collections used in this lens.

- Privacy As you build a lens and add content to it, it is strongly suggested that you make the lens "private". You can change this setting when you are ready for others to see your lens. In some cases, you might decide to create a lens for your exclusive use and never make it public. A golden key will appear as you use the lens, which helps remind you that it is locked or private.
- Advanced settings you must select "show" to see the additional settings



**Advanced Setting Section** 

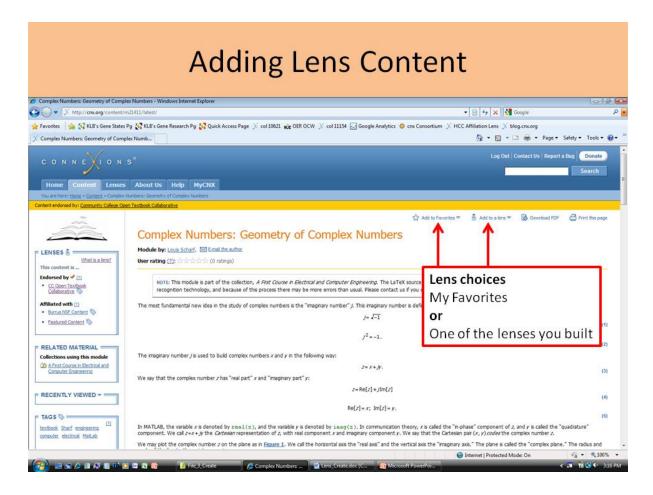
The advanced settings section consists for four items:

- Don't show the tags appropriate for lenses that are not using tags
- Lens ID The lens is going to be established as a URL and this allows you to decide the last part of its URL name. The instructions indicate to use all lower case letters. On names that involve more than one word, we suggest that you use a dash instead of a space. In other words, make it one continuous id name with no spaces.
- Language Defaults to English and would be changed as appropriate
- Text for External Web Page Above in the "Basic Information" section you might have identified a web page associated with the lens. If you did, then you may decide the exact wording that appears before that web link when the lens is created.

Remember to "Save" the lens when you have completed build it.

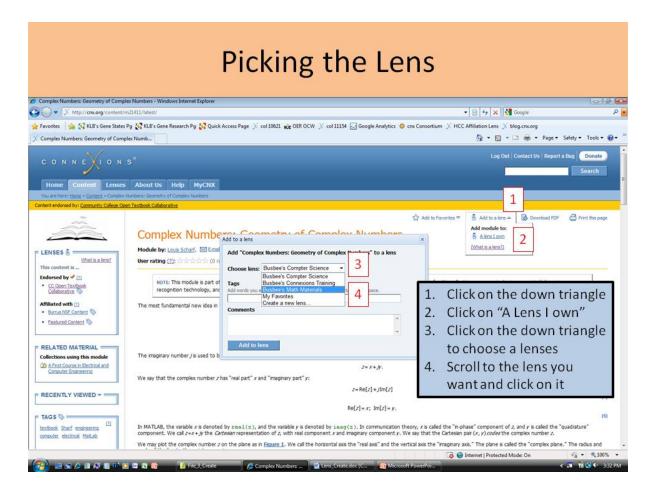
# **Adding Lens Contents**

In order to add contents to a lens you must be logged in to your account. If you are not, don't fret. The Connexions web site will automatically inform you that you need to login. After you have logged in the same content still shows and you can then add it your lens. Here is an example of adding content to a lens.

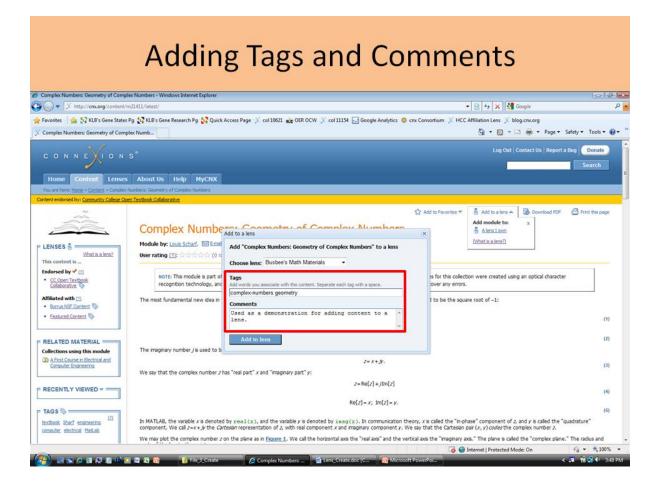


Adding Lens Content – Picking the lens

Remember, every account has a "My Favorites" lens and you might also have other lenses that you decide to build. In our example, we have found this item (content that is a module in the repository) on complex numbers and what to add it to the Math Materials lens.



Picking the Math Materials Lens



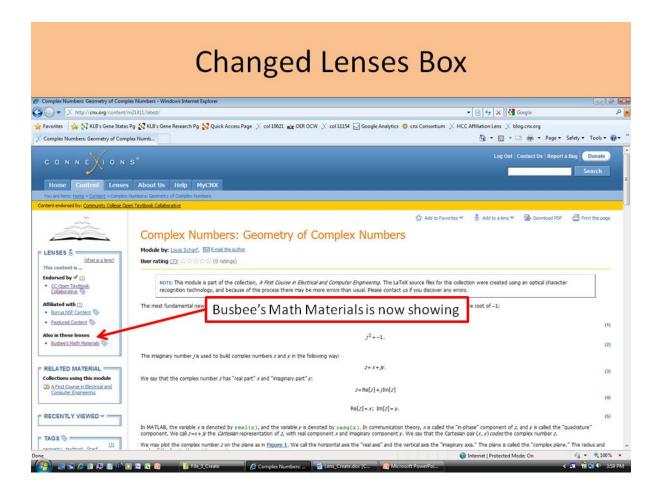
Adding Tags and Comments

We use tags to further focus a lens, that is to narrow the contents to items that are similar. Thus, we would want to use tags that are consistent within a lens. In the example, we used "complex-numbers" and "geometry" as tags. Note the use of a hyphenated word instead of two words.

Comments are not always added to the item as it is placed into a lens. Some lens makers comment on the quality of the materials or some special aspect of the item that would be pertinent to those using the lens.

You can add content to a lens without adding any tags or comments.

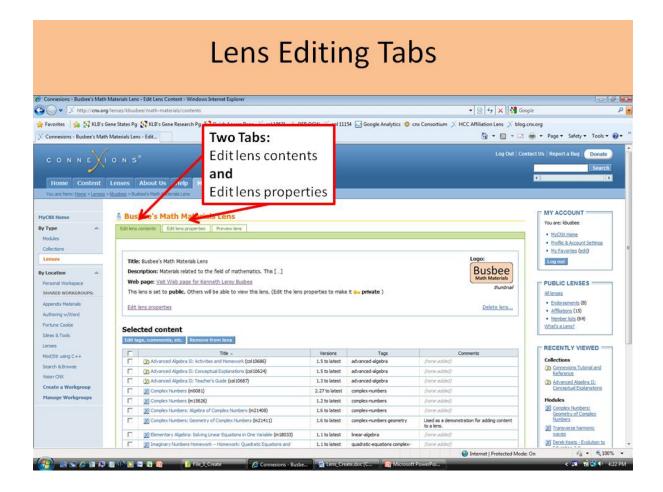
Once you click on the "Add to lens" button, the Connexions site will add the content to your lens and update the "Lenses Box".



Changed Lenses Box

## **Changing or Editing a Lenses Properties or Contents**

When you are logged into your account, you can edit any existing lens easily whenever you see the (edit) link at the end of a lenses name.



Lens Editing Tabs

Pick the tab necessary to either change the properties of the lens or its contents.

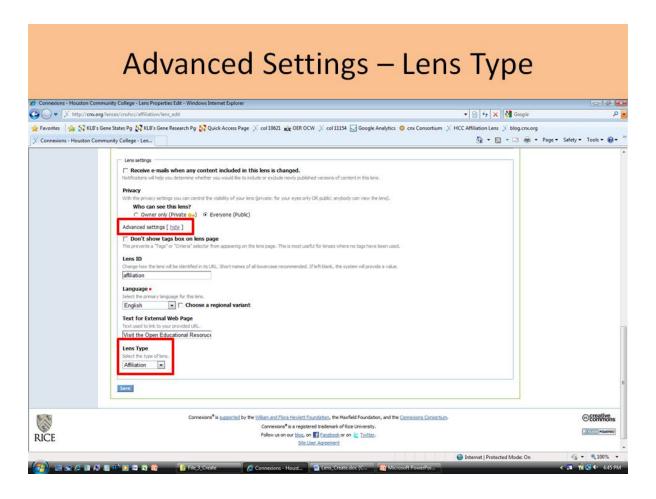
## **Practice Creating Lenses**

We suggest that you start slowly so that you can understand more fully how lenses are built and content is assigned. Perhaps it would be best to first learn how to add some content to your "My Favorites" lens. Then build a "Member List" lens (making it private) and add some content to it.

## The Item Unique to Endorsement and Affiliation Lenses

In addition to building "Member List" lenses, organizations have the ability to create lenses that appear in either the "Endorsement" or "Affiliation" lens area. Some organizations will choose to create only one "Endorsement" lens. Other will create more than one "Endorsement" lens, because they have a need to focus on many different parts of the repository. "Affiliation" lenses are used to show that the content from the repository has been created by them or by members of their organization.

The "Advanced Setting" has an additional item and the organization selects from the drop down box either: "Endorsement", "Affiliation" or "List" (meaning a regular "Member List").



Advanced Settings – for organizations – Lens Type

Making Your Connexions Lens Public The benefits and drawbacks of creating a public lens. How to point users to your Connexions lenses.

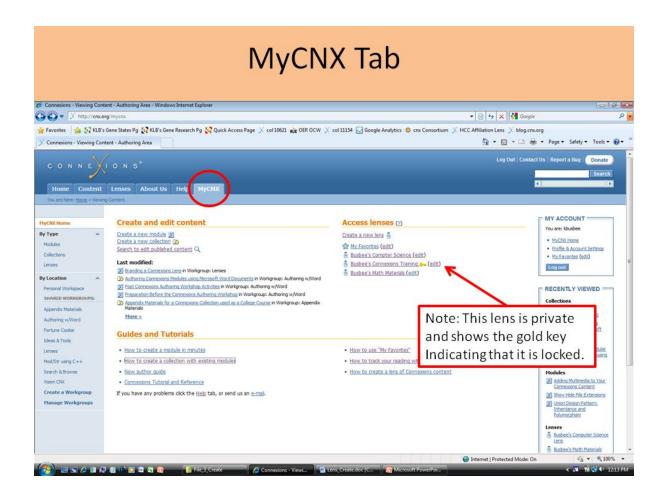
## **Benefits and Drawbacks**

Making a lens public is like watching (hearing) a singing contest on television. Some performers should be told not to audition. Some lenses are not very useful. When you make lenses public, your reputation (the quality of your work) is out for everyone to evaluate. So the primary drawback to making a lens public is embarrassment.

Lenses that serve a purpose, that is focus the user (or viewer) to see only part of the repository are desireable and are beneficial to users. Lenses focus to what ever content the lens creator desires. They decide how to tag and make comments. Here is a list of some of the concepts involved with focusing a lens:

- Specific area of study such as high performance computers or Shakespere.
- Materials for a specific course such as British literature. Different than a collection that might be used as a textbook, but more of the concept of reference materials for a course. You the creator of the lens an we assume the instructor of the course, whan to easily point students to a specific protion of the repository contents.
- Materials produced by an organization
- Materials reviewed for a professional journal
- Materials endorsed by a professional group or institution
- Materials published by a University Press Rice University Press uses the Connexions repository for its publication efforts.

During the construction phase of a lens, we strongly encourage that the lens be kept private.



Example of a private lens that is under construction

### **Common Ways that You can Point Users your Lenses**

#### Via Your Personal Web Site

On your personal web site place a link to your lenses.



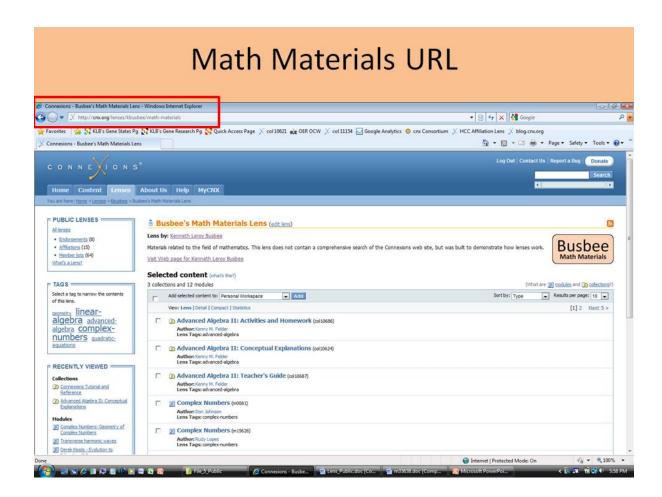
Links from your web site

# Via a Learning Management System (LMS)

If you are using an LMS include a web site link entry to your lenses.

#### Via an email

Copy and paste the URL to your lens into an email. Your URL is partially established by you when you create the lens.



Math Materials URL

#### Branding a Connexions Lens

An explanation of how branding works and changes the look of how users see the modules and collections that are part of your Connexions lenses.

# The Ability to Brand

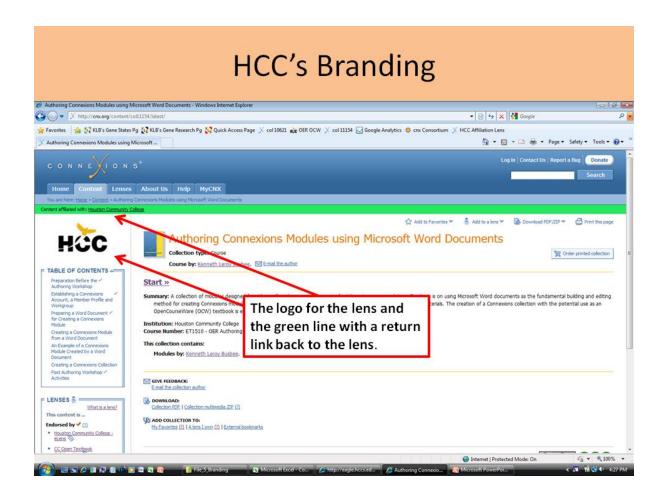
Branding is only available to members of the Connexions Consortium. It's one of the benefits of membership. Information about the consortium can be found at: <a href="http://cnxconsortium.org/">http://cnxconsortium.org/</a>

Consortium members should contact the Connexions Community
Developers and request that branding features be add to their account.
Provide your account name (that is your organization's user login name) in the email that you send to: <a href="mailto:cnx@cnx.org">cnx@cnx.org</a>

# What is Branding?

Branding is the ability to add a **presence** (logo and special link line to your lens) to the Connexions web site for modules and collections in your organization's lenses. When you direct people to the Connexions web site via your branded lens; a cookie is added to the person's web browser software. As they continue to visit any modules or collections (and that includes all of the modules in those collections) that was on the lens; your branding persists. Their browser remembers because of a cookie about your lens is added to their browser. Unless they clear the cookies on their browser software, their browser remembers forever.

The advantage to the consortium member is that users viewing materials in your lenses have a **stronger feeling** that the materials are approved by or affiliated with your organization. Here is an example showing the Houston Community College branding from its Affiliation lens on a collection. Branding looks same on modules within a collection that is on your lens. You don't need to include each module within your lens.



HCC's branding on its Affiliation lens.

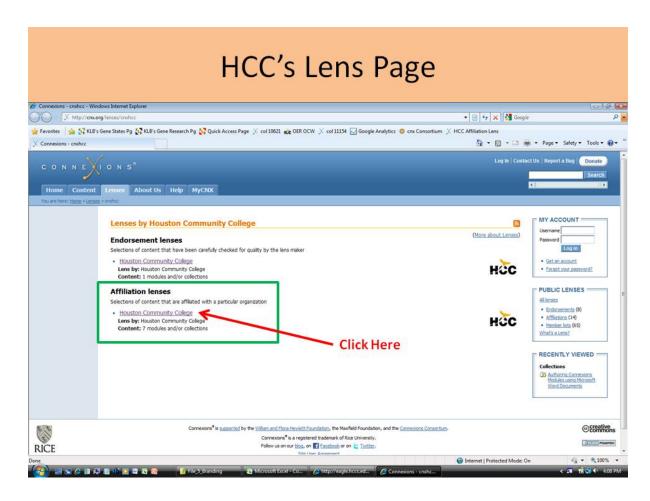
### **Common Ways that Users might Navigate to your Lens**

### Via Your Organization's Web Site

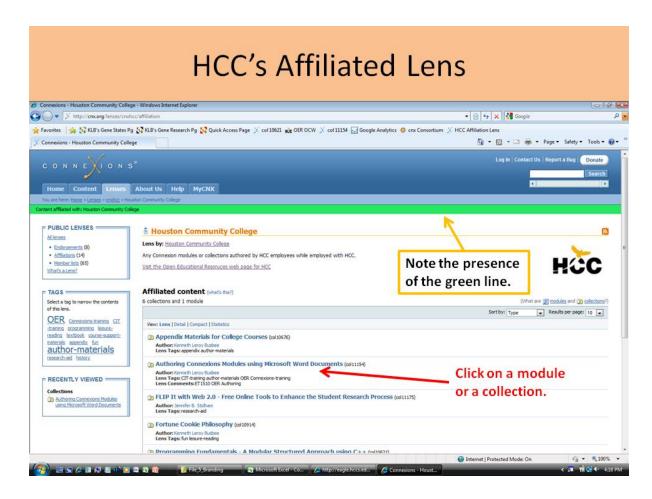
Follow the steps from Houston Community College's OER/OCW web site to the above module via lenses.



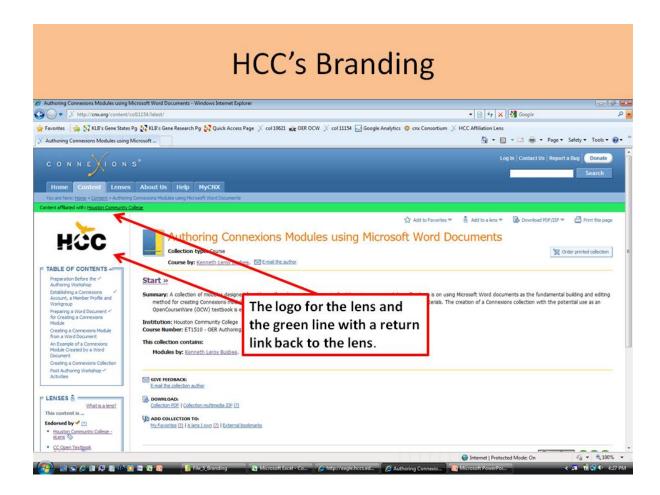
You provide a link to your organizations lenses.



On your lens page, the user clicks on one of your lenses.



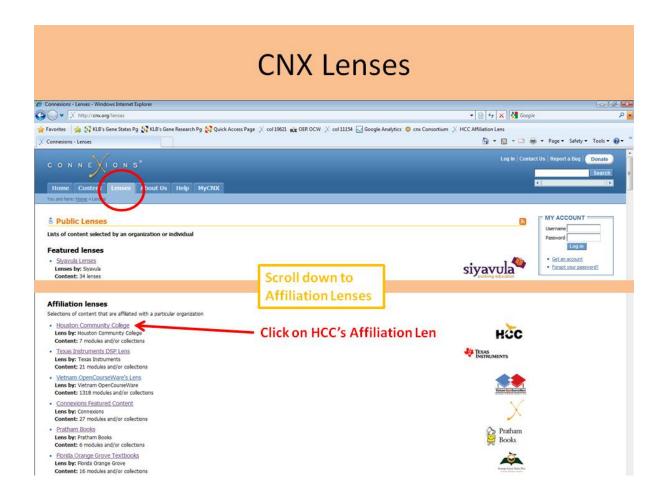
The user clicks on a module or collection from one of your lenses (the Affiliation lens in this example.



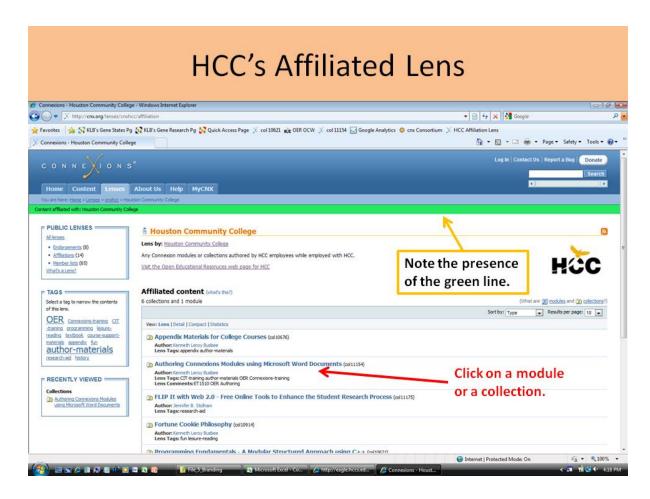
The user see the module or collection with your branding – your presence.

#### **Via the Connexions Lenses Tab**

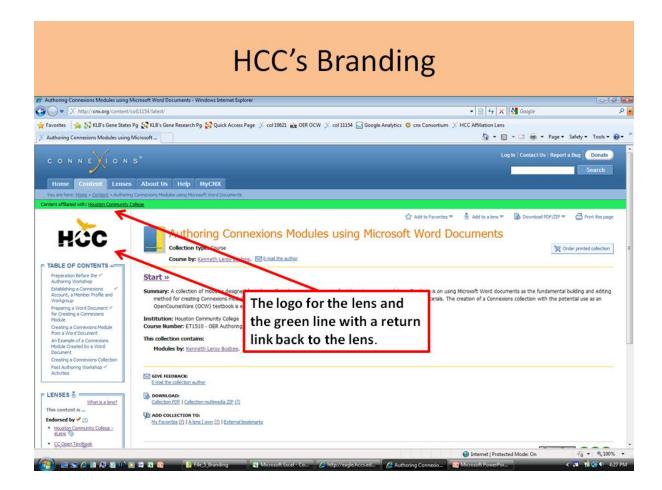
The user might view the many lenses available on the Connexions web site via the tabs and enter modules or collections via one of your branded lenses.



Navigating to your organizations lens via the many available on Connexions Lenses tab.



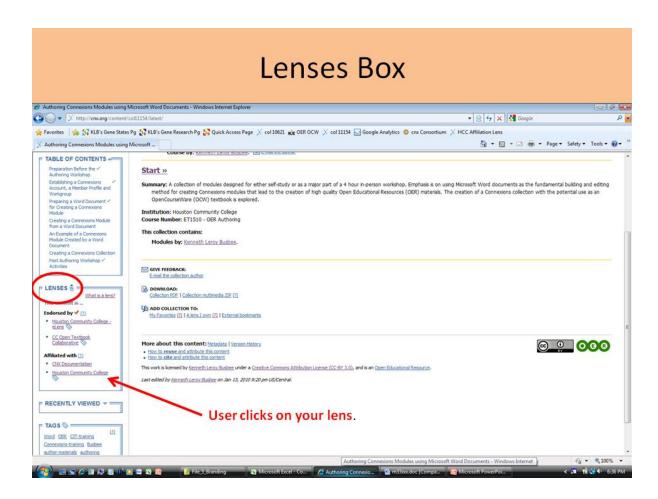
Then they select content – module or collection.



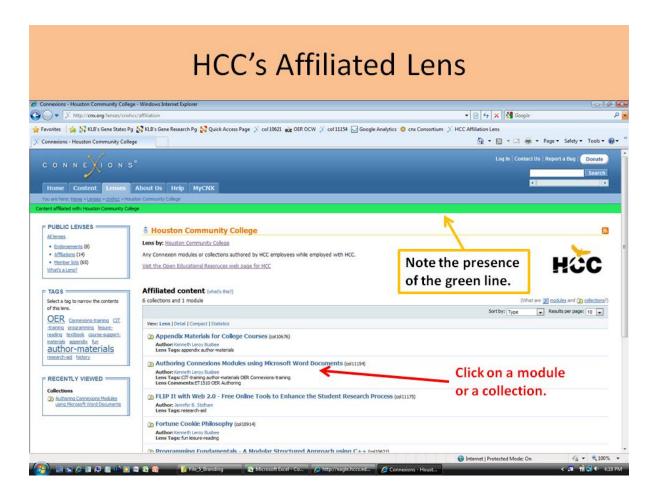
They see your branding.

#### Via the Lenses Box

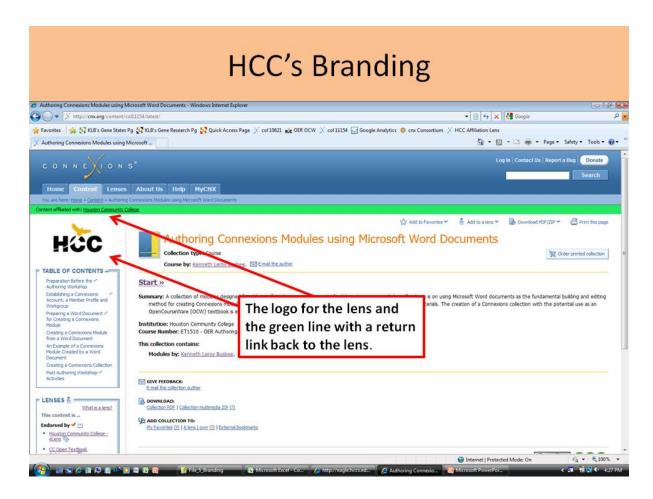
Once a user has navigated to an item that is on one of your lenses, they might not see branding because they have never been to your lens. Not until they navigate to your lens will they see branding. Lenses associated with a module or collection are provided in a Lenses Box to the left and after any table of contents if the item is a collection.



The user chicks on your lens.

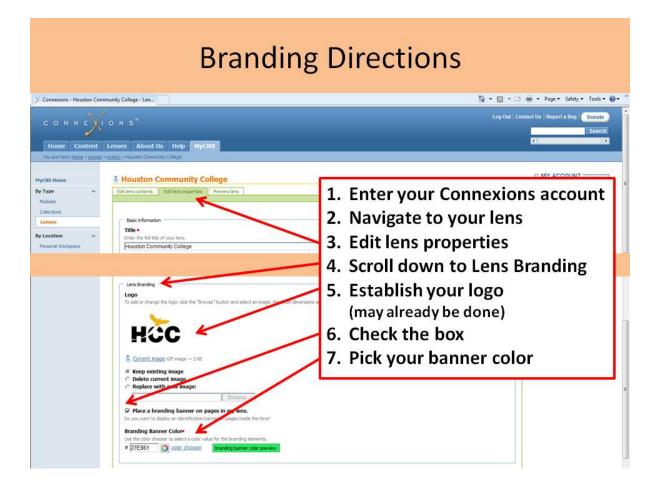


Once on your lens page the cookie is added to the user's browser.



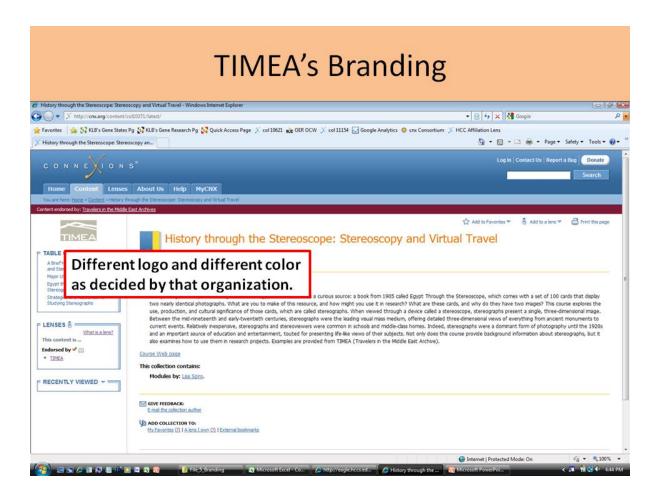
When the user selects a module or collection, the branding appears.

**Making Branding Appear on Your Organizations Lenses** 



Branding Directions – Don't forget to scroll down and save the edit to your lens.

Branding will look different for different organizations because of the logo and line color. Here is branding for the TIMEA Endorsement Lens.



The Endorsement lens for: Travelers in the Middle East Archives